

NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

No. 52

Spring 2009

The Dorking & District Preservation Society

DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY



Established in 1929

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NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

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NEWSLETTER 52: Spring 2009
Free to members

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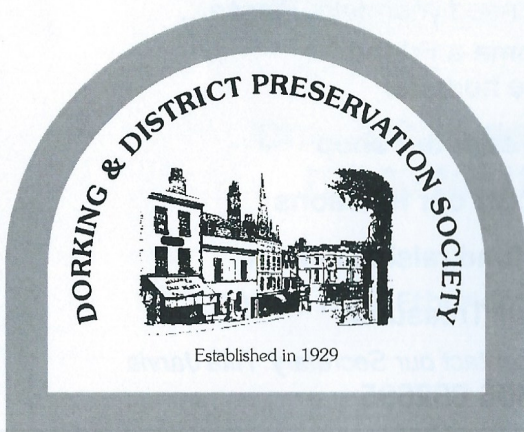
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editorial



Before I launch into my main editorial, I must acknowledge the loss to the Society of my predecessor, Alan Jackson, who died in March this year. I was introduced to him a few year's back when he asked me to do some calligraphy and illustrations for some of the poems he published on the back page of the large format Newsletter, and later writing articles for him. He was a great editor. I am of no religious persuasion so I shall merely say that, as long as all of us who knew him remember him, he will always stay alive to us.

As a onetime marketing man, our local government bemused me at their seeming lack of marketing skills. Shops are closing right, left and centre, and St Martin's Walk always seems to be half empty. Whacking up car parking charges and reducing funding for activities that bring people into the town struck me as being a mite crazy. Both Reigate and Esher have free, short-term parking which makes them 'Shopper Friendly', and they are always bustling with activity every time I visit them.

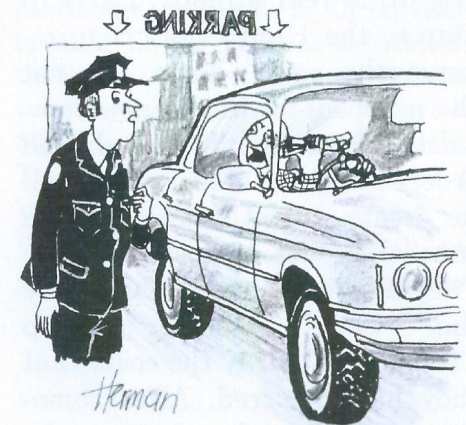
Dorking desperately needs to attract more visiting shoppers. We need to attract people to the town from outlying villages and beyond if trade is to be improved. We need exciting 'happenings', and more Farmer's Markets selling local pro-

duce. Relying just on town residents to boost trading in Dorking is not enough to stop the Tumbleweeds blowing down an empty, silent High Street a few years from now.

Many of us have been involved in the management of Companies, and are only too aware of the importance of budgeting for their activities to keep the finances healthy. This applies to local government as well. They also have to balance the books, but surely this is a time for lateral thinking that does not include plans for reducing income for Dorking's shops by introducing money raising schemes which discourage footfall in our shopping areas.

On a more positive note, this issue has some very interesting articles about the history of the area as well as all the usual 'newsy' items. I am still short of letters though. The Society finds it difficult to gauge the feelings of its members if they don't write and tell us.

Hank Etheridge, Editor



"You will need more than the deeds to your house to park here Sir."

chairman's message



I must begin on a sad note. Since the New Year, we have lost two stalwart friends of the Society; Alan Jackson and Brian Overell, who were both strong supporters of the Museum and of the Local History Group. You will find their obituaries on pages 14 and 15. We are greatly sorry they have gone.

Economic news, both national and international, seems to get gloomier from month to month, but prospects for the aims of the Society in 2009 are, on the whole, quite encouraging. We have had a piece of good news this year already. Early in March, the High Court comprehensively came down against the proposal for an energy-from-waste incinerator at Capel, and ordered Surrey County Council to delete the Clockhouse site from their list of possible sites. They also instructed SCC to pay the Capel Action Group £100,000 to defray the costs that they had incurred. After something like eight years, the County Council's Waste Programme is now back where it started. At about the same time,

the Times published a list of 150 County Councils and Boroughs in England, grouped into categories, depending whether or not they had 'improved well', 'moderately well', 'adequately' and 'not adequately'. I am sorry to report that in the last category six Councils appeared, and Surrey was one of them.

We did, however, have some news from an unexpected source. Harrogate is, like Dorking, more or less surrounded by Green Belt. Its Council, like ours, prepared a Core Strategy for its Local Development Framework, with proposals to build on re-designated Green Belt land should windfall sites emerge in insufficient quantity. The Inspector at their Inquiry rejected this procedure as 'inappropriate'.

Finally, a plea for help. We desperately need a Chairman for the Museum, a Minute Secretary, a Publicity Officer, a Roads & Transport Officer and a Footpaths Officer. If any one of you knows somebody whom they think could be likely candidates, please let me know. More details on page 13.

Martin Wedgwood

current planning

"The crop is poor and the pickin's lean", so Bette Davis sang in 'Stage Door Canteen' back in the forties. This is apposite to my Planning Committee, because we are only looking at around seven or eight applications per week at our meetings in Pippbrook. Most of them are for extensions, with the odd new build. Many of the extensions are, in our opinion, overlarge, and dominating their plots of land, thus falling foul of the Local Plan's env. 24.

Things that we have done and the letters we have written have, on the whole, had positive results. We strongly objected to two pastiche 'Footballer's Wives' buildings in the quiet rural enclave of Camilla Drive in Westhumble. The application was refused by Mole Valley, but the applicant has put in an Appeal to which we have again objected, likening the proposal to putting two cuckoo's eggs into a sparrow's net. This *Bon Mot* was to catch the Inspector's eye.

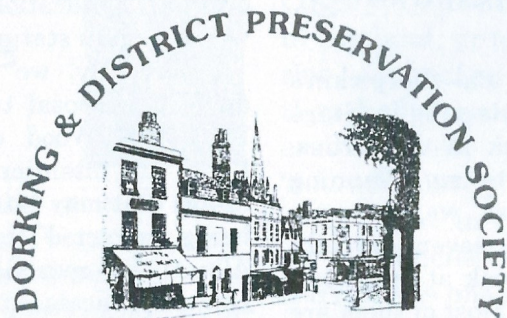
The proposed nine buildings planned for Longfield Road abutting the Nower, and about which we were (constructively) critical, have been refused. No doubt this will also go to Appeal.

We quoted env 24 to object to an over-large extension to a property in Highacre, off Ridgeway Road. The application was withdrawn and a 'Plan B' design has been submitted. In our opinion, this

proposal does not improve on the original application, so we have written again stating this.

Currently, we are involved in an SCC proposal to drill for oil in Bury Hill Wood off Coldharbour Lane. The intention is to exploit oil or gas that may exist. Oil is already being extracted at Brockham and Albury in reasonable quantities. However, access to the proposed site is via the narrow Coldharbour Lane, and also involves Knoll Road and Logmore Road as well. We are concerned that access from these roads will cause chaos, and we have written to SCC pointing this out. The Society's policy in cases of this type is usually not to object to the extraction of fuel reserves in our area, but to make absolutely certain that it is done with the minimum of disruption and, if no viable resource is found, to make sure that the landscape is returned to its original state. However, we think this particular proposal is ill advised because of the genuine difficulties there will be with access by 310 vehicles over a three-week period, 200 of them being large HGV's. This may well turn out to be a 'cause celebre'.

*Hank Etheridge
Planning Chairman*



Established in 1929

The Annual General Meeting of the Society
Will take place on
Thursday, April 23rd, 2009 at 7.30pm
In the

Christian Centre
St Martin's Churchyard
Dorking

After the formal meeting there will be
An interval for tea and biscuits

Followed by an illustrated talk by

Martin Higgins

On

The Restoration of Betchworth Castle

Annual Reports

Chairman

The most important work done by the Society during 2008 was the preparation and presentation of our criticisms and comments on the consultation draft of the Core Strategy of the District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). This was in two parts. Early in the year we commented on the 'Further Issues and Options Consultation' document. In the autumn we strongly criticised the 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment'. In our view the parameters under which the Government required it to be composed resulted in a document with little reference to reality. Nevertheless it was compelled to include areas it identified as being possible sites for development, several of which are in the Green Belt. We are, of course, totally opposed to any re-designation of Green Belt land. Too easily the suggestion, even hypothetical, of such a move tends to initiate a 'softening up' process in public opinion, and is to be deplored.

The regular work of our Planning sub-committee continued throughout the year. It was notable that, in the last quarter, the volume of applications for new housing, though not of extensions, dropped off quite sharply. We expect this will be the pattern for the coming year.

Our Best Development Competition was most successful. In addition to our 'Large' and 'Small' categories, we included one for Conservation. In addition to the prizes

for each category there were also two 'Highly Commended' certificates and two 'Commended'. Prizes were given out at the beginning of our October meeting, but this time we arranged a preliminary reception for the prize-winners. This was much appreciated, and we shall be doing the same in 2009.

Heritage Open Days, which we operated jointly with the District Council, attracted over 8,000 visitors, even more than in 2007, despite the small reduction in the number of events. Heritage Days in Mole Valley have a higher number of events than almost anywhere in the country, and they attract one of the highest number of visitors. They have become a great success nationally.

The Museum has been working on its plans for the redevelopment of its premises throughout the year, but progress has been disappointingly slow. We were sorry to lose the services of Professor Selley in November, and the Museum currently still lacks a chairman. The decision was taken in November to close the Museum at Christmas, prior to classifying its contents and putting them into store. We hope for better progress this year.

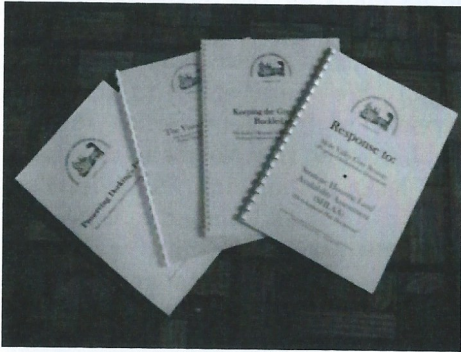
Ed White retired as Treasurer in October and was replaced by Ashley Baker. Christine Thom also retired as Minute Secretary at the end of June. Chris Childs ended his time as the Local History Group's number two on the Council and was replaced by Bob Miller. Simon Matthews, whose career is developing, resigned from the Council, but we value his opinion and ideas, so with his agreement, we continue to send him the

minutes of our Executive and Council meetings. Peter Mills, who has been on our Council for well over 20 years, has also resigned.

Martin Wedgwood

Vice Chairman & Planning Policy

I, in association with the other members of the Society's Strategic Planning Group, have most of the time throughout 2008 been developing our responses to Mole Valley's consultation documents regarding the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework (LDF). We spent hours discussing, drafting and preparing the various documents illustrated below. More details in my article on Page 18.



Sir Martin and I also presented Certificates to Prize-winners of the Denbies Project for the sixth form at Priory School.

Derek Rowbotham

Chairman, Planning

In 2008, the Planning Committee commented, in depth, upon thirteen large applications and a host of minor

ones. Some of them I have reported upon in the last three issues of the Newsletter, but some of them stand out in my mind because of the large amount of time my committee and I spent visiting sites, photographing, and talking to neighbours of the applicants and architects and developers.

The application to demolish an enclave of Victorian worker's cottages and stables at Mickleham Downs, and replace with some very badly designed 'pastiche' Surrey buildings, involved us in many meetings at the site and a slew of telephone calls and letters. The application was overwhelmingly refused by MVDC and went to Appeal, which was also thrown out. We are still involved along with Mickleham Parish Council, CPRE and Ben Tatham, the local District Councillor, to monitor what the developer comes up with next.

We were involved in discussions with architects and developers about the second and approved application to build apartments on the site of the Malthouse Pub in Mill Street, Dorking. The architects have invited our committee to sit in when colour schemes and materials are discussed. This will only happen, though, when the project goes ahead after the economic downturn.

Other projects we have been involved in were the extension to the Saxon church in Mickleham; the badly-conceived Vincent Lane Care Home proposal; involvement in the proposed extension of the Dorking Conservation area; advising BT about the removal of some of the redundant, iconic red phone booths in Dorking; peripherally involved in trying to

save the Old Fire Station and promoting some outstandingly good architecture of some contemporary dwellings, winning some and losing others.

Hank Etheridge

Highways & Transport

At the beginning of the Society's year, I continued to be involved with the much criticised Pump Corner enhancement and the proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) scheme carried out by Surrey County Council. I attended numerous meetings relating to the Pump Corner debacle, and was in close contact with the Dorking Chamber of Commerce representative. In addition, I was also interviewed on three different occasions by Southern County's Radio to discuss the Society's view.

Currently, any further solutions appear to have reached an impasse. A suggestion to reverse the flow of traffic in Junction Road was, as expected, shown to be impractical.

It was gratifying to learn that MVDC had rejected the SCC's suggestion of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in the town centre and surrounding roads. This would have compelled residents to pay for the right to park in front of their homes.

The twice a year session of the Public Transport Consultation meeting at Pippbrook provided a particularly useful opportunity to question officials of British railways and local bus operators about services in the area. Unfortunately, since its demise, there has been no adequate replacement except for Passenger Transport Forums, organised by SCC.

These are divided between east and west parts of Surrey, but to which we have been unable to get an invitation.

Peter Mills

Deepdene Garden Restoration Committee

As I set out in my Report last year, there has been no progress on the Garden Restoration. Kuoni are the owners of the core of the original garden and their businesses is flying travellers around the world to exotic destinations. It is impossible to make anyone who is important in the Company realise that they are situated in a nationally important heritage site, which has become overgrown and inaccessible since Kuoni moved there. It is clear that there is no possibility of change while senior management and the present owners are in place.

Richard Ingle

Membership

The total number of members is 780, which includes 39 corporate members, and we also send 23 Newsletters to various local and national organisations.

As last year, we still have members paying their subscriptions via Standing Orders to our old account at Barclays Bank. Last year it was 40 members doing this; now it has come down to 20.

Just over half our members pay by Standing Order, and this is showing a small increase over last year. Subscriptions are due in January each year, and having a Standing

Order does tend to remove the need to 'diary' it, write out a cheque, put it in an envelope, hunt for a stamp and then post it.

Peter Parkin

Best Development Competition

There were 15 entries in 2008, the same number as in 2007. The winner in the 'Large' category was Pickering House, Dorking; in the 'Small' category, Abinger School; and in the new 'Heritage Conservation' category, The Granary, North Street, Dorking. Much of the work here was to the interior, which meant the judges needed to look at the inside of the building, something not undertaken before in this competition. 'Highly Commended' was Manor Cottage, Betchworth and Castle Mill Bungalow. 'Commended' awards went to Props Barn, Newdigate and St. Margaret's Court in Dorking.

The judges this year were Beryl Higgins and Peter Mills (of DDPS), Pete Mills (of MVDC) and Cllr. Malcolm Johnson.

Heritage Open Days

We again had a very good year, and our new, paid assistant, Marion Rodgers, was a great help. We are delighted that she will be on the team again in 2009. In 2008, we had 93 events with the theme 'Hidden Treasures'. Rod Shaw of MVDC once again worked tirelessly to make the event such a success, and we are very grateful for this. Arrangements are underway for Heritage Open Days 2009, which is from Thursday September 10th to Sunday 13th. The 2009

theme is 'Memories and Mysteries'. We are looking for oral history, with local people recording memories of schooldays and the like. If you have local memories and would like to take part, please contact Sarah Hawkes on 01306 883699.

Sarah Hawkes



Dorking & District Museum

The Museum welcomed over 3,500 visitors in 2008 (including users of the archives and school pupils who delved into the loan boxes). The Museum's website attracted 2,742 hits and generated numerous Email enquiries.

The very successful 'Dr Who' exhibition, which opened in September 2007, continued with a change of monsters until the end of February 2008. This was followed by a display entitled 'Silk - Satin - Leather', and featured the Museum's collections of shoes and shoe-making equipment. A special exhibition commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams and opened to coincide with the Leith Hill Music Festival.

A donation from the Dorking Decorative and Fine Arts Society and a grant from SE Museum's Services enabled the installation of blinds in the archive section.

Two long-serving volunteers retired in 2008 - Fred Plant, Curator of Exhibits, and John Woodcock, Facilities Manager. We have a new Facilities Manager - Geoff Beech, but

as yet have no Curator of Exhibits. The Museum is also seeking a new Chairman, as the previous Chairman, Professor Richard Selley, resigned in the autumn.

The Museum closed in December 2008, and it is intended, subject to successful fundraising, to reopen a new two-storey 'Museum and Heritage Centre' in 2010. This will have exhibition space on the ground floor and provide public access to the archives on the first floor.

Sue Tombs

Local History Group

This year, the Group has enjoyed ten speakers, a members' evening, a guided walk and two outings. Members attended Surrey Archaeological Society's Local History Symposium with a relevant display, as well as exhibiting at other local events. We also hosted a Portable Antiquities Scheme at Dorking Museum during Heritage Open Days in September. The Group has participated in the Mole Valley Local History Forum organised by Surrey History Centre, and has contributed web pages to Surrey County Council's 'Exploring Surrey's Past' website. Via our website, the Group has dealt with queries from around the world, most significantly one from Cambridge University Press relating to Dorking in Jane Austen's juvenile novel, 'The Watsons'. Two newsletters have been produced and our annual journal was published in October. Sales of publications via the Museum, website and local events have been steady.

Kathy Atherton, Chairman

WANTED

MUSEUM CHAIRMAN

A fascinating opportunity to chair a vibrant committee and oversee the new Museum's revamp. Some experience in management would be an asset.

MINUTE SECRETARY

If you are a retired lady or gentleman or self-employed, with some experience of working with Board Directors or Senior Executives, computer literate and have a desire to help in the work of the DDPS, contact Sir Martin Wedgwood at the number below.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

If you have some small experience of PR and can liaise with the Press, Radio & TV, this would be an interesting position for you.

COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

If you are passionate about the beautiful countryside around Dorking, and would like to make a difference, this is the job for you.

ROADS & TRANSPORT OFFICER

An important part of the Society's remit, attending meetings about Highways, Railroads and Airports, and reporting back to the Council.

FOOTPATHS OFFICER

If you are a walker who uses footpaths in our area, and feel that you could deal with District and County Departments, we have need of your services.

For more details, please contact Sir Martin Wedgwood on 01306 889941

Email: martin.wedgwood@ddps.org.uk

Obituary



ALAN JACKSON 1922 – 2009

Alan Jackson, who died in February this year, was not a man who blew his own trumpet, but was an indefatigable author with a national reputation. Above all, he was an authority on the history of Britain's railways and of their impact on the 20th century environment, especially that of London. Books on this subject poured from his pen. One of the earlier ones, *Semi-detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport 1900-1939* (1973) is a key work for students of the history of vernacular architecture. One of the latest: *The Railway Dictionary* (2000) was in its fourth edition by 2006.

In 1990, our Society decided to have a Newsletter and Alan became its editor. This he tackled with enthusiasm, and only gave up 45 editions later at the end of 2006. Thus it was as editor of the Newsletter that I principally knew him.

For the Local History Group, he wrote *Dorking's Railways* (1988); *Around Dorking in Old Photographs* (1989) and *Dorking: a Surrey Market Town* (with Vivian Ettlinger and Brian Overell). He also edited the Group's newsletter until 1988, improving on its original format. He was a steward of the archives at the Museum, where I remember him sitting at a PC, compiling a gazetteer of all the place names found in the Museum's collection of old maps. We are sorry to lose him.

Martin Wedgwood

Obituary



BRIAN OVERELL 1927 – 2009

Brian Overell was an active member of the Local History Group for 25 years, at times acting as Meetings Convener and Secretary. He is probably best known to many as a co-author of *Dorking: a Surrey Market Town*. In 1998, he became the Group's Editor, introducing a new format for its annual journal, *Dorking History*. Sadly, failing eyesight forced him to give this up in 2003.

After retirement in 1992, he also became a volunteer in Dorking Museum Archives, where he helped and encouraged many researchers over the years. In 1993, when I took over as Curator (Archives), Brian became Assistant Curator, helping with documentation and conservation of the collections and setting up exhibitions. Together, we devised a system for producing comprehensive printed indexes using programmable computer databases, and Brian devoted a huge amount of time to make the wealth of information in the Archives more readily available. It was a very busy time, but it was also a happy one; Brian's wit and dry humour often reducing us all to laughter. The Preservation Society owes him a great debt of gratitude, and the world of Local History is a poorer place without him. He will be sadly missed.

Mary Turner
Curator (Archives) Dorking Museum

news&views

Forget us not

Peter Parkin, our Membership Secretary, rang me the other day about subscriptions – the life-blood of the Society – to tell me that all of the subscriptions on Standing Orders had come in, but some of you who pay by cheque haven't remembered to send a cheque yet. I have a mental picture of them slapping their foreheads and saying "Golly Moses! Is it that time of year again?" Yes it is! So if you have forgotten, please get out your chequebook now and send us your subscription while it is on your mind. Last year, we laid out a lot of money just to combat Mole Valley's ambition to grab large chunks of our Green Belt upon which to build hundreds of new homes. This situation is likely to continue throughout this year. We also, on your behalf, support other local and regional organisations that have similar aims to our own, as well as raising funds for the museum rebuild.

Welcome Aboard

The Society's ranks are gradually swelling, so it is with pleasure that we welcome into it:

Mr & Mrs Levette of Westcott

Mr & Mrs Cole of Westhumble

Mr & Mrs Bailey of Westhumble

Mrs Humphry of Horley, and

Mr J. Weller of Dorking.

We look forward to meeting them all at our Annual General Meeting on April 23rd.

Tudor building revamped

Our Planning Committee, some of whom are pictured below with Mark Elsheby of Latchmere Properties, have been involved from the start with the restoration of the Tudor period Little Dudley House in South Street, Dorking. Mole Valley's Peter Mills has supervised the work with occasional nudges from our committee.

The restoration is, however, also a commercial venture. Proper electrical wiring and modern plumbing have been installed, as well as an all-glass addition at the rear of the building which looks out onto what will be a small, landscaped garden. The aim of all this work has been to make Little Dudley House into an ideal venue for an up-market restaurant.



From left to right: Su Johnson, Mark Elshelby, Beryl Higgins, Lady Wedgwood & Hank Etheridge

Keeping the flag flying

As you will have read, the Museum is closed for re-building so that more exhibits can be displayed in brighter surroundings and the Archives organised better. In the meantime, we have been fortunate to be able to present a photographic display in a shop in St. Martin's Walk. At the same time, you can buy Museum books in the adjacent Fothergill's coffee shop.



St. Martin's Walk's 17th Birthday

Seventeen years ago, Kenneth Baker MP opened the 'Walk', unveiling a plaque that has since gone missing, but has never been replaced. A time capsule, including a copy of the 'Advertiser', was placed in the foundations. Local residents, with vivid imaginations, say that the Walk is haunted because it was partly built over a graveyard. I am afraid that there is not a ghost of a chance of you seeing one.

A Retiring Gentleman

In January this year, the Society's Executive was sorry to hear of the unexpected retirement of *Our* Peter Mills. He has retired from our Council where he handled the

Society's Roads and Transport brief, a role that he has held for nearly twenty years. Peter and I are of a similar age and background, he in architecture and I in graphics and architectural illustration.

Both of us were Boy Scouts and have served in Local Government, he in the MVDC and me as a Parish Councillor in Cookham. I echo something he once said in an interview, "Scouting taught me a great deal about serving the community, and it encouraged me to become a councillor". Finding someone to replace him is going to be hard because of his wide knowledge of the District's Highways and Railroad matters.



Peter at a Council Meeting

The NUM3ERS GAME

With acknowledgements to Paramount TV Corp.
25%

The proportion of England's businesses that are in Rural areas according to DEFRA, has firms employing 5.5m people.

1,000

1000 Allotment Plots to be supplied by the National Trust throughout Britain.

£300

Amount DECC estimate the average household could be wasting annually on energy bills.

697,000

Total empty homes in England, an increase over 2008.

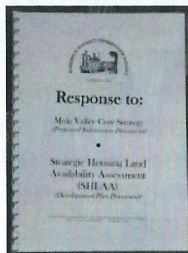
Source: Planning Magazine

Mole Valley's Plans for new housing in the District are flawed

by Derek Rowbotham



At the beginning of December last year, comments on Mole Valley's Core Strategy plans were to be submitted to the Secretary of State by the first week of January. The Society has contributed to all of the earlier stages of the plan, believing that a critical approach was necessary. Working closely with the Surrey Group of the CPRE, we completed our separate submissions just before Christmas in time to meet the January 5th date. These were presented in a document, written in two parts, dealing with all aspects of the Core Strategy: Part 1: Core Strategy; Part 2: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).



OUR CASE

In this submission, we said that we were concerned about the adverse effects of **forcing** housing development in inappropriate parts of the District. We found the identification and assessment of proposed housing sites in the SHLAA to be unsound. There is proof that MVDC's list of available sites brings forward Green

field ones rather than the Brown field sites recommended by national policy. Their reasoning for this appears to relate to the loss of profitability which will happen due to the probable collapse of the housing market.

The intent of the SHLAA is at odds with policies relating to the legally protected Metropolitan Green Belt around Dorking. The past record of housing builds in the District shows a high percentage of land supply made up of unidentified 'Windfall' sites that are not really reckoned with in governmental Policy Statements. This aspect has not been taken on board by Mole Valley in their SHLAA.

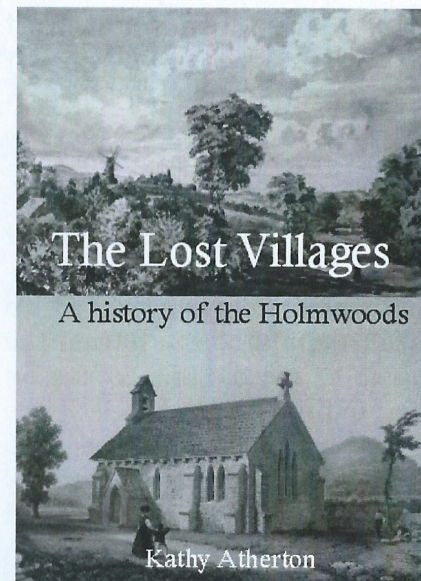
Our own research indicates that an important part of local policy should be to avoid development in Dorking's Green Belt, to preserve its green perimeter and stop 'Urban Sprawl'.

Driven by the present government's unreasonable targets for new homes and the badly thought-out insistence on land availability despite all the changing economic circumstances, and in the teeth of a severe recession, Mole Valley has produced an SHLAA listing potential sites for the first five years of their Local Development Framework, many of which are inadmissible by Green Belt national policies. They are also ruled out on conservation and access grounds. By including so many designated Green Belt and Green Field sites, the Council not only risks acceptance of its whole LDF by government, but possibly also damages future planning in the District.

STATING OUR CASE

We, in conjunction with CPRE (Surrey), have pointed out these facts in the Society's submission, and shall strenuously argue our case at the forthcoming inquiry, putting the SHLAA alongside the compilation of the Core Strategy. Failing to have the proper legal evaluation of taking sites from the Green Belt has led, we believe, to an over-development capacity in the first phase of MVDC's Plan. This will distort 'proper planning' in the areas of the District that are protected by the national policy, seriously damaging the viability of their Local Development Framework. We question whether the Core Strategy has been formed with a credible evidence base. We shall return to this matter later in the year after we have taken part in the first stage of the Public Inquiry.

It is the Society's aim that beautiful scenes such as this remain unspoilt and free of urban development and 'Sprawl'.



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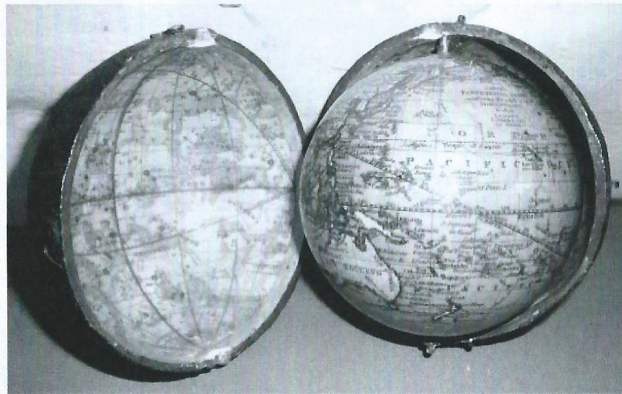
The Museum artefact
That captures the world of
Adventure and exploration

By Fred Plant & Hank Etheridge

When the Museum closed last December, Fred Plant and I decided that we must keep it in front of the public eye during the re-vamp or rebuild, depending on what funding can be raised. Since the government hi-jacked the Lottery Fund to throw at the 2012 Olympics*, cultural, artistic and intellectual causes have gotten short shrift, making it highly unlikely that the Museum could access it.

To achieve our aim of promoting the Museum during its 'down time', we looked around at our Museum's artefacts and came up with the Globe illustrated. It, we felt, is a very important exhibit because of its association with the voyages of exploration by seafaring adventurers. Apart from the internal star chart, it shows the explorations of Captain Cook, Clarke and Gore, who sailed with Cook, the Comte de la Perouse and Vancouver.

The Terrestrial Globe was made in London in the first half of the 18th century by C. Smith & Sons of



The Strand. It is only 4½" (10cm) in diameter and encased in compressed board covered with shark skin – Shagreen. As well as showing the voyages of Cook, Perouse and Vancouver, other discoveries up to 1834 are included. Large areas of central Africa and North America are marked 'Unknown Parts'. (There are, thank goodness, no markings of 'Here be Dragons'.)

All of us know about the adventures of Captain James Cook and his untimely demise, but here are some facts you may not know. James Cook was born 1728 in Marton, in North Yorkshire. After spending several years as a seaman in the North Sea, he joined the navy in 1755, becoming 'Master' in 1959. In his career, he sailed in the *Endeavour* with Joseph Banks to The South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia,

The Terrestrial Globe

naming New South Wales and Botany Bay on the way. He was clubbed to death in Hawaii in 1779.

The Comte de la Perouse, named after the 'La Perouse Strait' between Sakhalin and Yezo, was born near Albi in France in 1741. Between 1778-83 he distinguished himself in naval battles with the British fleet, during which time he destroyed the Hudson Bay Company's Forts along the St. Lawrence River in Canada. In 1785 he commanded an expedition along the NW coast of America, then crossed the Pacific to do the same along the NE coast of Asia. In 1788 he sailed from Botany Bay, but his two ships were wrecked on their way to the New Hebrides.

The other navigator whose exploits are recorded on the Terrestrial Globe is George Vancouver, born in King's Lynn, Norfolk. He sailed with Cook on his second and third voyages and was promoted to Captain in 1794. He did survey work in Australia and New Zealand, but is best known for the precision of his survey work of the Pacific coast of North America from San Francisco to Alaska. The City of Vancouver is named after him.

*Montreal has only recently finished paying for their Olympics in 1976.

An early 19th century map showing many of the places explored and discovered by Captain Cook, as well as the places he named.



Vivian Timcke-Burdett, one of our members, is the author of the first part of this article. Kathy Atherton, Chairman of the Local History Group, has added some 'Holmwood' related information about Francis Seymour Larpent, a benefactor of that Parish, Ed.



Rough pencil drawing taken from reproduction of large family portrait

Francis Seymour Larpent

By Vivian Timcke-Burdett

Francis Seymour Larpent was born on September 15, 1776, at his parents' London Home in Newman Street, which linked Goodge Street with Tottenham Court Road. Newman Street still exists today.

Francis was the eldest son of John Larpent, an Inspector of Plays, and his first wife Francis, daughter of Maximilian Western of Cokethorpe Hall, Oxfordshire.

John Larpent was a member of a distinguished Belgian aristocratic family. His Country Seat was Putney Park House and his land holdings were significant. Today, there is a 'Larpent' Avenue in Putney, and a 'Gowan' Avenue in Fulham, Gowan being another Larpent family name. Francis attended Cheam School and, in due course, entered St John's College, Cambridge, in the Michaelmas term of 1795. He was awarded a Bachelor of

Arts degree in 1799, followed by a Masters degree in 1802.

War Service

After giving considerable thought to the choice of a career, he was called to the Bar in May 1803. For nine years he confined his activities to the Western circuit, but in 1812 was appointed Judge Advocate General to the British forces fighting in the Peninsula wars under the leadership of the Duke of Wellington.

The post of Judge Advocate General was a civilian appointment and Larpent was charged with the task of making army discipline effective and fair, and to restore the efficiency of the Courts Martial.

During his time in the Peninsula, Larpent established a sound working relationship with the Duke of Wellington, seen by some as a cold, secretive and uncommunicative leader. Larpent realised that, whilst Wellington could be all of those things, he could also be loyal and appreciative.

For his part, Wellington admired Larpent's success in abolishing the inconsistent and hopelessly inadequate disciplinary regulations and Courts Martial.

In 1813, while in the Peninsula, Larpent was captured by the French, but released immediately in an exchange of prisoners.

Larpent left the Peninsula in 1814 at the end of the wars, but peace was short-lived, and Napoleon's last battle against the Duke of Wellington was at Waterloo on June 18th, 1815. Larpent was prevented from being present at Waterloo by a Government mission to Vienna.

In March 1815, Larpent married Catherine, daughter of Frederick Reeves of East Sheen, formerly of the

East India Company. Following her death in 1822, Larpent married, on December 10th in 1828, Charlotte Rosamund, daughter of George Arnold of Halstead Place in Kent.

Larpent occupied various Government posts over the following years, and at the special request of the Prince Regent, to covertly investigate the conduct of the Princess of Wales to ascertain if sufficient grounds existed for the Prince to commence divorce proceedings.

The Holmwood Connection

In 1830, Francis and Charlotte purchased 120 acres of land in South Holmwood and constructed Holmwood House, where they employed one domestic manservant and three domes-



tic female servants. A significant number of labourers were also employed on the land, including a sawyer to work on the woodland areas. Additionally, another dwelling was built, known as Holmwood Cottage, to house Charlotte's two unmarried sisters.

Francis and Charlotte contributed significant sums of money to local good causes, including the building, in 1838 of St. Mary Magdalene Church in South Holmwood.

In 1845, Francis died at Holmwood House. He had been in poor health for some time. The cause of death was given as 'Decay of Nature'. he was

buried at St. Mary Magdalene, and Charlotte placed a plaque in his memory inside the church.

Charlotte remained at Holmwood House until 1852 when she moved to Devon, where she lived until her death on April 28th, 1879. Family members erected a memorial plaque alongside that of her husband's placed there seven years earlier.

Bibliography: Longford E. 'Wellington: The Years of the Sword' (the Literary Guild)
Larpent G. 'The Private Journals of F.Seymour Larpent'

A Little Local Interest

By Kathy Atherton

The arrival of Francis Seymour Larpent and his wife in 1830 had a significant effect on the wild and isolated communities of the Holmwood. Improvements in road technology and carriage transport in the later years of the 18th century had seen Dorking attracting wealthy residents fleeing from London for some years: the Holmwood remained remote, however. The Larpents were among the first well-to-do settlers.

Larpent's wife, Charlotte Rosamund (nee Arnold) had family connections with the area; together with her sister Caroline, she owned Subberies Farm. After their marriage, the Larpents bought up the adjoining Swites farm and other small pieces of land to establish an estate of about 130 acres to the south of Mill Road. At Subberies, they built a grand mansion with tall chimneys which they named 'Holmwood House' (not to be confused with the much later Holmwood House on Mid Holmwood Lane). Swites became the estate farm. Holmwood Cottage – though with a library, billiard room and ten bedrooms, it was pushing the definition of 'cottage' somewhat –

was built across the Park to house other family members.

In the early 19th century, the scattered dwellers of the Holmwood working on the surrounding farms, in the timber trade or servicing the needs of travellers on the turnpike, had neither church nor school. It was at the instigation of Charlotte Larpent and Julia Heath (daughter of George Heath of Kitlands) that the church of St. Mary Magdalene was established in 1838. Mrs Larpent's mother, Mary Ann Arnold, put up an endowment of £1,000. Her memorial window – tucked away in the tower – depicts the building of the church (with labourers in medieval dress). An adjacent window depicts the Good Samaritan being brought into the wayside chapel which St. Mary Magdalene then was, being situated on the Dorking to Horsham turnpike road, directly opposite the Larpent's long carriage drive.

A modest vicarage (later much extended) was built a year later, and Mrs Larpent went on to establish a school. Initially, girls were taught in South Lodge, one of Holmwood House's estate cottages, and boys in a hut near Moor Cottage. In 1844, however, a school house was built to the south of the church. Having established the key infrastructure of South Holmwood village, Mrs Larpent was planning to establish almshouses when her husband died in 1845.

The estate was inherited by Francis Seymour, Larpent's half brother (by his father's second wife), Baron John James de Hochpied Larpent, whose title, from his mother's family, was German. Charlotte Larpent moved to Devon but remained in contact all her life, leaving money to the school in her will.

Plaques commemorating the lives of Mr and Mrs Larpent can be seen in

St. Mary Magdalene. Later Larpents, including de Hochpied who died in 1860, have rather more splendid memorials.

In 1866, Holmwood House was bought by John Gough Nichols, the antiquarian publisher and editor of the Gentleman's Magazine, who renamed it 'Holmwood Park', and whose family remained in occupation until the 1920's. During the course of the 20th century, the estate was gradually broken down, the farm, cottages, lodges and dower houses being sold off. The house itself survives only in part, having been hit by an incendiary bomb during WWII.

Mrs Larpent's mother's memorial window, tucked away in the tower of St. Mary Magdalene church, South Holmwood, showing labourers in medieval dress.



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